JUN 14 1899

5—Cleverest Stories—5

The Black Cat

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JULY 1899

The Traveling Cabin of Ruddy Gulch.
Paul Shoup.

Wanted—A Name.
Hugh Wakefield.

Wanted—A Legal Decision.
Florence White Ruger.

The Hollow in the Red Rocks.
A. W. Whitehouse.

Sir Straggle.
Enos D. Taylor.

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The Black Cat

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The Traveling Cabin of Ruddy Gulch.*

BY PAUL SHOUP.

THAT Kee was a heathen Chinee, and as such was, of course, peculiar. Incidentally, he was the best cook between Sonora and Yuba Dam. When I first knew him, his timid, jump-about ways impressed me with his likeness to a kangaroo — before the acquaintance was abruptly broken off I decided he more nearly resembled a gorilla. Bobby Wilson saw in him neither the one nor the other; but then, at that time, Bobby was a forlorn castaway, Ruddy Gulch a desert island, and the one sail of salvation in sight a girl.

Wilson was the mining engineer in charge of the Good Hope Mine, which was capitalized on great expectations. The mine has joined other great expectations, and, what is of more importance, the great lumber flume that was on the other side of the cañon is also gone.

It was a wonderful flume. One would lie awake at night and listen, fascinated, to the caged river that went booming down the gulch in its rough, plank prison. It would go rumbling along on the straight courses and protest in a higher, noisier key at the

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turnings of the cañon. There is no flume like it now in California in size, though there is one down the valley that rivals it in length. It was broad enough and deep enough to float the biggest sequoia that ever picked its way up among the clouds. The cabins of Ruddy Gulch for the most part clustered underneath the pines on the hillside just above the flume, so that every night it sang us our vesper hymn.

Ruddy Gulch was picturesque, if a trifle tilted in its ways. It was just above Inspiration Point, which was the thin edge of the wedge that separated the gulch from Oak Cañon. Here, on top of the Point, a great pine lay fallen, parallel to the flume, its scarred gray trunk stretching out over the tip of the Point. If you were venturesome, you crawled out upon it and were rewarded with the finest view in the cañon. Pine-covered hills shouldered one another down to the broad plain of the valley; solemn, white mountains looked over the hills across the gulch, and below the beckoning water in the great flume ran swiftly by. You closed your eyes after looking at the water and crawfished to terra firma.

Miss Dorothy West came up to Ruddy Gulch with her father for the benefit of what was left of his health. The camp at once fell in love with her, for though Ruddy Gulch may have been a little uncouth and a bit wild in its way, there was never any doubt in its ability to recognize those qualities which in a man produce a desire to "shake hands" and in a woman, added to the beauty and freshness of youth, make adoration commendable. So Ruddy Gulch fell in love with Miss Dorothy, as it should have done, but Bobby more than all the others. How desperate his case was may be imagined from the fact that, though he was in a region where Judge Lynch interpreted emotions and the vigilance committee acted quickly, yet he sat up of nights and wrote abominable verses in her praise. Even That Kee remarked Bobby's far-away look and informed his assistant at the cook-house that the quality of the flapjacks served at breakfast must improve, or he would highbind him. The perplexed assistant used more baking-powder and stirred the batter with a larger spoon, yet Bobby did not get out of the clouds. It takes much baking-powder to affect a forlorn lover's appearance.

There was no doubt about the assay of William George John-

son's character. He was of hard-milling and rebellious ore, and if in all of it there was ever a trace of precious metal, no human test discovered it. He was big and ugly, inside and out. He obtained work in the Good Hope as an expert with the hammer and drill, but he used too much powder and too little muscle in his attempts to make an impression, so, at the request of Bobby, the foreman paid him off one evening and gently suggested that he retire from his position as a silent partner in the operation of the mine, because he was not worth the powder he blew up. William George thereupon proved that, contrary to general opinion, he was good at one thing at least — his remarks were comprehensive, forcible and conclusive. Then he sought Wilson and found him near his cabin above the flume on the slippery hillside.

When I was last up Ruddy Gulch way, the oldest inhabitant was still declaring that there was never another such entertainment in camp as the fight that followed, not even excepting the time when the circus came up the road. It was not possible to gain a detailed account of the event, for the spectators were too interested to take notes, but Uncle George Webb, who was a bull-whacker for the mill company, succinctly remarked that "it war a contest between thunder 'n lightnin'; thunder made 'n awful lot of noise, but lightnin', he did the work."

The fight was over when Wilson secured a firm foothold, and, lifting his big antagonist, threw him prettily into the flume. That took the fight out of William George; a bath was bad enough in any way, and a bath in ice-cold water was simply shocking. Losing his pride, William George acquired cunning, and settling down at the Red Fire, planned and planned when there was no stranger to be sociable with at the stranger's expense.

In the meantime, Bobby's love affair approached a climax. There was less poetry and more visits to the cabin up on the crest of the hill. He no longer sat out in front of the cabin in the evening and gazed pensively at the sky line above, and the artistic cottage that broke it; long walks up and down the gulch succeeded that avocation. And notwithstanding some few pangs of jealousy, the whole camp generously rejoiced when it was rumored that there would be a wedding as soon as the old gentleman was a little better.

That Kee was reputed to be a capitalist. His salary as a cook was according to his merits, and he was a thrifty Celestial. The question had been argued with a great flow of words and other things at the Red Fire, and it had been definitely decided that he was a capitalist. Perhaps William George had pondered over the subject until he felt a proprietary interest in That Kee's possessions; certainly he was greatly excited when Uncle George dropped in at the Red Fire one morning, calmly surveyed the company until a respectful silence assembled itself, and then announced:

"Reckon, gents, you haven't heerd as how the Mongolian, That Kee, was gone through last night. Some chap visited his shanty, trussed him up neatly in his blankets, and then, by ways sundry and various, tried to make him tell where his wealth war planted. Bein' an obstinate Mongolian, That Kee wouldn't *sabe:* so the visitor, gettin' tired of persuadin', ramshackled that shanty like an inquirin' earthquake, but he didn't find much dust. Then, promisin' That Kee he'd call again, he made tracks. After awhile That Kee gets his voice loose, an' the neighbors, desirin' ter sleep, war forced to come over an' see what war ailin'. That Kee warn't much hurt, but terribly scairt. He's pecooliar, jest like the rest; when we asks him if he suspicions anybody, he just shakes his pigtail an' says, 'No *sabe*.' Guess he ain't got any confidence in his ability to secure revenge with his tongue."

Miss Dorothy had presented to Bobby a very fine handkerchief, with his initials carefully worked in the corner. This token That Kee found on the floor of his cabin the morning after the robbery. Thereupon he sat down and reasoned in his peculiar Chinese fashion. Wilson was to be married that very day; the Good Hope Mining Company was temporarily embarassed and had not paid its employés for some time; Wilson needed money, doubtless, and to rob a Chinaman was a crime of no particular importance; therefore — he arose, carefully put away the bit of silk and went out. I afterwards remembered that I met him on the way up the gulch that morning, and wondered how I could have been so fallaciously fanciful as to compare him with a kangaroo, when obviously it was a gorilla I should have had in mind.

The wedding was very successful. The two most popular

people in any camp cannot get married and the result be otherwise. Mrs. Dorothy had a very fine collection of nuggets in the forms of various souvenirs, and the boys bought Bobby a watch, on which they lavished all the wealth a jeweler could crowd into one watch — and the jeweler was an expert in that line.

We came down together from the little church in the upper end of the gulch, and we stood below the flume, and Bobby fondly pointed up at his home on the Point. He had worked hard to make the cabin and its surroundings attractive, and his pride was to be excused. Low, and with a broad porch and numerous square windows, the redwood logs carefully hewn, the whole almost covered with vines, and a blooming rose fence about it, the house was beautiful. Bobby pointed at the house, but his eyes were on Dorothy as he said:

"There, sweetheart, is our home."

Which merely illustrates the fact that mining engineers are no more reliable forecasters than weather prophets.

The moon was but a crescent that night, and That Kee, slipping unobtrusively about the works, had no difficulty in securing a coil of large rope used as a cable. With this he crawled under the flume and toiled up the hillside until he reached Inspiration Point. I have no doubt but that if I could have seen him then, with his high cheek bones, his sparse beard, his wide, grinning mouth and his squinting eyes, the resemblance to a gorilla would have been more marked than ever.

After he had rested awhile beside the big pine, he made the rope fast about the butt end of it. Then, catlike, he glided up cautiously to Bobby's cabin, and on hands and knees, feeling his way, carefully circled it with the other end of the rope in his hand, here fastening the rope about the end of a log and there squeezing it into some crevice. When he had completed the circuit he knotted the loop securely. The tree and the cabin were fastened together.

He heard a noise within as he finished, and he crouched trembling beside the corner of the porch. He listened intently — there was nothing more. So he crawled for a little way, and stopped and listened — then crawled a little way again. Finally, he rose to his feet and ran, but not far. Stopping at the foot of a

large tree, he carefully dug about it for a minute, and unearthed a package of giant powder. He returned to the fallen pine. Then he hesitated for a few moments, for his education in western ways had not included a course in explosives. The problem, however, was a simple one, and presently he squatted down at the end of the trunk, where the great, white roots spread bonily outward, and dug his mine. Then he lit the fuse and retreated up the hill. On the whole, I do not know that I would have cared to see his smile at that time.

That afternoon, immediately after the wedding, I found it necessary to go up the mountain on business. I was down in the bottom of the gulch, my horse picking his way slowly among the boulders in the dim moonlight, when Ruddy Gulch was awakened by the explosion. We who were in the bottom of the gulch at that time, some of the boys who lived down there and who ran out hastily, and myself, saw a most curious phenomenon.

First, we saw in the uncertain light the big pine that had so long reached out over the Point, shiver, then raise itself slowly, and then unnoticed, come plunging down in the darkness toward us. Unnoticed, because by that time every eye was observing the curious antics of Bobby's house. In the dim light above the line of the Point it was seen to stagger, then seemingly to brace itself, then move slowly and reluctantly down the hill, crushing the rose fence, and finally to leap straight out toward us. I heard a shrill cry of terror, and my heart sank. Amazed, nevertheless, I continued to stare at that empty place where the house had been. There, outlined against the sky, came an outlandish figure, dancing, leaping and beating its breast. "The gorilla!" I whispered, instinctively.

As the great pine struck the flume and righted itself, with a roar the eager water seized it and swept it onward. Down the flume it went, and the log cabin, like a chained captive, followed, swaying, upsetting, leaping in the air, groveling along the hillside, bounding over rocks.

An hour later, when I came up out of the brush where I had been fearfully examining the cabin's roof, I met some of the boys carrying something in an improvised litter. What it was I was afraid to ask. My throat was too dry to speak.

"It's a sort of vengeance from heaven, I reckon," said Uncle George. "The other time he only got a few knick-knacks, a handkerchief and sich, which Bob kind of suspected him of takin,' but this time I reckon he counted on doin' a good job. He was fooled, howsoever, for he was ketched in the act an' the Lord punished him in his own way."

"Punished whom?" I gasped.

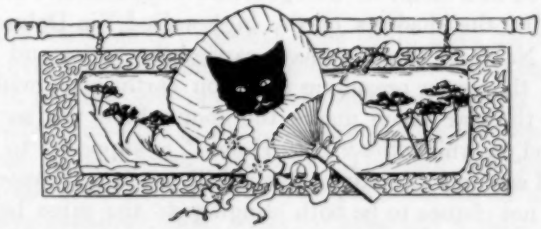
"Why, don't you know?" he said in surprise. "William George was burglin' the cabin when it started travelin'."

"But Bob and Dorothy?"

Uncle George looked at me with contempt.

"I s'posed everybody know'd that they went down on the evenin' stage in response to an urgent word from Mrs. Bob's mother to bring the old gentleman an' spend the honeymoon at their home."

I did not explain, for an explanation was unnecessary. The heathen Chinee is peculiar, and That Kee's sudden disappearance caused only passing comment.



Wanted — A Name.*

BY HUGH WAKEFIELD.

Y first story is finished, except for a name. That is still lacking — so persistently lacking that I wonder if it is a story at all. After a few preliminary explanations and flourishes it begins like this:

The awful orgies of the Carnival of Resurrection were at their height in the Holy City. Pilgrims from everywhere crowded the narrow ways of Jerusalem, adding a new but by no means less repulsive lustre.

The creeds represented were so at variance that even among themselves they did not recognize each other as Christian at all, and the conglomeration of pilgrims to the most sacred shrine for its most holy festival amounted to little else than a riotous mob, chanting, wrangling, fighting, praying aloud at the street corners, surging through the city toward the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Frequently their ferocity demanded the intervention of the Mohammedan police, while Arabs and Turks, Jews and Syrian mongrels, stood in a cloud of unregenerate witnesses and laughed.

Down in the shadows of the high-walled Via Dolorosa, where Jesus of Nazareth is said to have carried the cross and worn the crown of thorns for preaching peace on earth, good will to men, and near the scar which marks the spot where the sacred stairs once stood on which the "Ecce Homo" is supposed to have been spoken, I saw one Christian pilgrim kill another, because, forsooth, they did not chance to be both clinging to the same hand of the impersonation of omnific love, and thereover came to blows.

In material ethics it was not different from the war which is constantly waging all over nominal Christendom, but it was reproduced in such graphic repulsiveness, right in the ways once traversed by the gentle Master and in the midst of celebrating his

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resurrection, that it became revolting long before they came to blows. But the streets were nothing to the scene inside the church, where the rabble crushed and crowded and fought its way — a mass of struggling, groaning, fetid fanatics.

No one could willingly witness it who realized what it would be, but I did not realize, and on a pass from the Turkish prefect I sat in the narrow gallery on the south side, looking down upon that part of the church where the crowd was most excited. Nothing but the heavy iron railing prevented it from trampling over the Stone of Unction and it was only kept from riot and bloodshed by threatening Mohammedan soldiers stationed about the walls as it pushed and jammed toward the great stone mound in the centre, within which is the chamber known as the Holy Sepulchre.

Sometimes the chanting from a protected altar or the peal of an organ rose for an instant above the bellowing, roaring crowd, where each individual struggled, regardless of his neighbor, to be nearest to the sepulchre at the annual issuing of holy fire from the borings in the side of the rock. All who recognized a familiar strain madly howled the response and pushed so much the harder, till everything was drowned again by the incoherent vociferations of the furious pilgrims.

It was nothing to watch for long, and presently my eyes were seeking rest in a face that was looking down from the opposite gallery.

Of all the contrasts in humanity none could have been greater. That face even lacked sufficient excitement for an expression of disgust. It was the face of a Greek, apparently, being too light and too finely formed for a Turk, though the owner was clad in the costume of the Syrian Faithful. The face was young and beardless; not much beyond twenty at the most, set in strong relief by heavy eyebrows, dark, speaking eyes and a mass of black hair, resisting a garnet fez that was bordered by a white turban and decorated with the deep silk of royalty.

It was a face emphatically beautiful — magnificent, but not perfect. It was like a perfect face in marble, for it only lacked what marble must — a heart.

A calm, cold, scornful smile flecked the serene features as the

owner tossed the ashes from his cigarette down among the rioters or blew wreaths of smoke and looked through them at the fierce crowd about the sepulchre.

Young as the face appeared, there was no immaturity about it, however. Those cold, black eyes had in them the look of having already probed everything to the core and of knowing, beyond peradventure, that there was nothing, absolutely nothing anywhere, but self and hypocrisy.

The features were as capable of all the heart's passions as those of Venus or Apollo. Sentiment may have been there once, but it had been weighed in the balance, found wanting and banished.

It was a face to fascinate, and when I once began to watch I found it impossible to turn away, even when the tumultuous roar from below indicated that the sacred fire had burst from the sepulchre and that the pilgrims were fighting, regardless of life itself, at last, to light the tapers they had brought, or burn their clothes, or scorch their flesh, or singe their hair or beards in those holy flames.

The climax over, the crowd, groaning and glorifying God, emptied itself into the streets again, and high and low, throughout the Holy City, I sought in vain for another glimpse of that strange face.

It had vanished.

A little later the story has found its way out of the storm and into the calm of that sublimest solitude of earth, the great desert of Nubia, and it goes on in this way:

My little caravan came to rest on the dunes of the Nubian desert, some fifty miles or more, already, from the sacred Nile, and for the first time I beheld that glory of glories, the coming on of night in Nubia.

Fiery red the sun sank down behind a bank of leaden clouds — clouds from which no rain was ever known to fall, but which hang for ever and ever along that desert horizon. For a moment they were transformed to a royal Tyrian girdle, then everything was merged in a sombre silver-gray as suddenly as though a drop-curtain had fallen, without warning, closing the drama of the day.

Even the camels were taken by surprise, and those that were still standing sank quickly on their knees, then on their haunches

and grotesquely toppled over, with that agonized wail which forever gurgles through their long, twisting throats during that laborious undertaking. Those that were already on the sand simply breathed a ponderous sigh, stretched out their necks and with their chins upon the ground closed their great, languid eyes.

Some of my Mussulman servants, too, were still upon their praying mats, but they made haste to finish, covered their heads and slept.

In less than five minutes I was alone awake, sitting on a sand dune at a little distance from the caravan, absorbed in the grand harmony of calm, when I suddenly became aware that the very air I was breathing was permeated with a constantly deepening purple dye. The soiled coats of the shaggy camels were suffused. The dingy abbas of the sleeping Arabs and my own burnous were changed to robes of crimson, worthy of Solomon in all his glory. The sand lay like an ocean of blood. The sky was a great dome of garnet, studded with crimson stars.

A camel lifted his head for an instant, drowsily opened his great eyes and looked about him, then dropped his head again with a deep, long sigh. Those eyes, so soft and brown, like sealskin, in the fierce glare of the sun, flashed in that brilliant afterglow like gorgeous carbuncles set in a fringe of furry fire.

As quickly as it came the color faded again and the heavens grew dark, save where the throbbing stars scintillated like live coals.

The night wind came creeping over the sand with that soft, soughing sound that is so soothing after parching days upon a desert, and away in the east the sky grew luminous again and the stars faded before a great arch of red that rose majestically out of the desert, growing quickly white and dazzling as it threw off the sand.

Just at that instant something appeared on the desert's disc, standing out athwart the moon distinct as a sail at sea. It was black and sharply cut against the white — swinging, swaying, colossal. With a shudder I thought of the phantoms of the wild lore of Nubia. But the moon left it, floating upward, flooding the sand till it gleamed like a field of hoarfrost.

The phantom dwindled to a tiny speck, a dot upon the desert,

disappearing now among the dunes and appearing again as it rose on the motionless waves of the eternally silent sea.

It was only a camel headed for the Nile. There was a long night's journey between it and the palms and pastures of the sacred river and nothing but sand behind it, parching, burning sand, for days and days and days.

Camels may be as common on the sand as sails upon the sea, but there was something awful in the thought of one, alone, in that infinite solitude of Nubia. Then as he rose again upon a nearer dune I noticed that he had changed his course and was coming toward me.

Had the rider seen the glow of my campfire when the night wind touched the unexpended coals? Or had he caught the shadow of a sleeping caravan breaking the silver shimmer of the sand?

Common sense alone should have warned him to keep away, instead of coming nearer; for no man's highway is the highwayman's own, and the Bedouin who is not a robber when fortune favors him with an opportunity is not to be found on open sands, where might makes right.

I said to myself that he must be passing lonely, if the sight of fellow-men tempted him to run such risk, or thirsty, to dare so much for water, or hungry, to ignore that desert law. And as he came still nearer he even set at defiance the universal courtesy and safeguard of stopping at a good distance to shout his name and tribe and by the mercy of Allah ask the hospitality he required.

Evidently he was in very dire distress, asleep, or mad. And how the camel loomed again, even as it did against the moon. It was a monster, a huge Bactrian, whose size alone would make it a tempting prize. It came nearer still and as I live it was a white camel — a creature almost beyond the purchasing power of gold.

Abraham sent a white camel to fetch the wife of Isaac, and the Queen of Sheba came on a white camel to the court of Solomon. A white camel bore the star-eyed Cleopatra along the green banks of the Nile, all guarded by grand retinues, but who could conceive of a mortal mounted on a white camel crossing the Nubian desert alone?

The capture of such a creature would tempt a desperate struggle, even against odds. What bravado for that solitary rider to deliberately rouse a sleeping caravan. And look at him! He is parading in all the gorgeous habiliments of an Eastern potentate, from his deep, flowing burnous, showing its silken sheen in the moonlight, his fringed effie bound with a glistening band and saddle cloth of Persian crimson, to the trappings on the neck and haunches of his camel, without so much as an abba or ragur to protect them from the sun and shifting sand or hide them from the envious eyes of appropriative deserteers.

Fool! If he was not afraid for himself I was afraid for him. My servants served me because it was for their advantage, but this would be beyond my jurisdiction and pay them better than my service. If I objected it would only be the worse for me and if he roused one of the fellows sleeping yonder any one who ever trod the desert would predict to a certainty that his white camel would join our caravan and retrace his steps across the sand with a new master. Still he came on.

To save him if possible I rose and went to meet him.

Seeing me coming he lifted his prod and the sublime creature beneath him humbly and silently obeyed, stopping without a single sound and turning his great shaggy head till his dreaming eyes could comfortably look up at his master. He seemed as plain as words to say: "What next, my lord?"

The devotion was infectious. I would fain have touched my forehead to the sand and said, "In Allah's name I am your servant," though the moonlight fell so brilliantly behind him that his face was hidden in black shadows.

He spoke, and for an instant my heart stood still. The sound was soft, yet clear, like the music of a distant bell. Had I been free to think I might have realized that he was wise and had no mind to rouse the caravan, for though each syllable was distinct to me I doubt if the sound of a whisper reached five feet beyond. But I was not free to think. A blow could not have better stunned me than the fact that he was speaking English — immaculate, faultless English!

There was not a Mussulman sleeping behind me who did not believe me one of the Faithful — an Egyptian Turk. During the

month I spent in Mecca I was three times in the inner court, kneeling at the corners of the Caaba and bathed in the Zemzem unsuspected. What was this phantom, rising with the moon, riding the desert alone, that he should discover my identity at a glance and be able to address me in English? And of all things impossible on the Nubian desert, that fearless phantom, sailing his priceless ship over the pirate-ridden sea, was softly saying: "Will you kindly favor me with a match?"

Great Heavens! Neither lonely, hungry, thirsty, mad nor sleeping.

Only in want of a match! And by what earthly or unearthly influence should he know that in my girdle there was a case of precious English vestas?

Fully convinced that I was dreaming I mechanically produced a match, lighted it and placed it in the hand stretched toward me, on which a brilliant diamond caught the flame, then saw it flash, just once, at the tip of a white cigarette and fall, still burning, on the sand. But in that flash I also saw for one lurid instant the outlines of the perfect face — perfect as marble — which had looked down upon the orgies in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, almost a year before.

I was dumb. As in a trance I heard:

"This is better than Jerusalem. This is real. That was religion. What a difference." Then lifting the prod to start the camel he added:

"Somewhere back upon the sand my caravan of fifty camels is coming from the west. It will pass here when it pleases gentle Allah. If the leader is awake he will seem to be aimlessly looking for something small along the sand. He does not know English, but if you see him tell him in Arabic to keep on looking and that if he does not find me by the time he reaches the Nile he is to turn down the river. I am going toward Cairo."

The camel started and still I watched without a word, as, swiftly and silently, it sank again into a shadow, a swinging, swaying shadow against the glistening sand, in that strange land of silhouettes.

Later on the tale has twisted itself into the heart of South Africa — or more properly under South Africa — and into another

scene of confusion, where it goes on like this: Eight hundred feet beneath the forests of Griqua and the waters of the Vaal thousands of naked Kaffirs and hundreds of white men were working like maniacs in the long, intersecting and radiating galleries of the Kimberley diamond mines. The air was hot and stifling. The darkness was too much for the tapers fastened to wires that were thrust into the matted hair of the miners. The flames formed only faint halos of light about themselves, like lights in an oil painting.

Long tunnels, stretching away in every direction, were filled with these dancing, flickering stars, like the sky in an autumn night, when the earth is passing through a meteoric stream.

The din was enough to drive one mad. The angry shouts of overseers, the cursing of foremen, the grunting and groaning of Kaffirs, the clanging of sledges, picks and shovels, the rasping buzz of the drills, the thud of falling clods, the clatter of iron wheels on iron rails, as hundreds of tilting trucks dashed down the inclined tracks to the main shaft or were laboriously pushed back again, were only incidents in the endless hubbub of vibrations struggling for precedence in the long, low passages.

There was the throbbing of the distinct engine, too, and the constant clatter of chains as the "Blue" — as the diamond dirt is called — was sent up the great shaft and out into the sunlight to lie there for weeks — for months, sometimes — till the tough clay softened sufficiently to yield to the great pulsators its treasures of garnet and jade, iron pyrites and diamonds.

Then add again, without number, noises inexplicable, and lo! you have the diamond mines. Here and there rotundas were excavated, where branch borings reached the main lines, and in each of these electric lights were flashing, water-skins and canvas bags were hanging, distilling drink for the miners, and in each there stands, eternally, an English supervisor and an English tally-man, counting the truck-loads of blue as they come thundering from his division.

As far as an electric light penetrates a tunnel one catches a glimpse of the sweltering army of naked Kaffirs, shining, panting, grunting, dripping, working as though eternity hung upon their single exertions for that single hour.

A fiendish yell from the driver on a truck for an instant rises above the din and the truck disappears down the main shaft. Only a fraction of a second more and the wheels would have crushed the life out of a Kaffir bending over, searching for his taper which had dropped. There is no stopping those trucks on their way to the shaft. Brakes they have none, for brakes are not what is wanted. The one requisite is speed — speed.

A demonian fever fills the very air. Each truck-load of blue that is hoisted up to the sunlight means a never-failing average of a carat and a half of diamond for the manager's safe. The more dirt the more diamond. Speed is everything. Sweat, groan, die. Anything but delay.

I was standing beside the manager, in one of the rotundas, under an electric lamp. The baas was explaining something of the construction when a deafening boom closed his lips. The walls about us and the earth beneath us trembled and a gust of wind swept out of one of the tunnels and instantly into it again, as a wave rolls up the sand and back upon the beach, extinguishing every flickering taper on its way.

For a moment the groaning and the clashing in that gallery ceased but the clatter of the trucks upon their way and the yells of the truckmen seemed only so much the louder. They never cease.

"Only a dynamite blast," the baas muttered, with a smile. Only another means to speed. And even while he spoke the tapers began to flicker again and the work went on.

Suddenly out of one of the galleries, through the rotunda, under the electric light and into the tunnel opposite something shot which was not a truck-load of the blue. I looked up just in time to note that it was a rather grand affair, with headlight and brake and a white man in uniform to manage it. More than that I saw but the face of the only other occupant — the face I had seen at the Holy Sepulchre and out on the Nubian desert.

It caught my heart and stopped my breath and I stood dumbly staring into the darkness where it disappeared. Faintly I realized that the baas was saying:

"That woman in my car is an American. Queerest creatures on God's earth the American women, by Jove. Think of a woman

knocking about Griqualand alone and of all things demanding to be taken to the bottom of a diamond mine. I couldn't refuse her for she's been nursing, gratis, in our hospital for the last six months and she's leaving for somewhere or other this afternoon. She's the handsomest woman I ever saw, and better than all the other nurses together with the sick, but by Jove I wouldn't like to insure the life of a well man who tried to get within arm's length of her. Did you see she was smoking a cigarette when she passed us? And upon my word I thought she nodded to you. Did she? Do you know her, man?"

"I have simply met her twice, by accident," I replied. "Go on and tell me more about the drill."

Well, the story runs along in that way till it finally winds up in a pawnbroker's shop, away in America — in San Francisco. It comes to the shop in this way: Up and down, up and down, what a precipitous thing thou art and wherefore art thou, San Francisco? Thy heights and depths, thy hills and valleys, thy impossible declivities would defy the best Swiss village-maker or Rhine castle-builder, yet thou hast clasped them all in the happy medium of quick and comfortable attainment, even from the highest hilltop to the lowest level, by means of endless cables buried in the bowels of each thoroughfare — lost to sight but ever present to the ear — calmly defying whatever angle, to hurl elaborate trams wherever mortal man could wish to go all for twopence ha'penny, lovingly nicknamed a nickel.

How many days I wandered there, through fogs and hurricanes and sunshine, protected or exposed according to my passing fancy by those accommodatingly constructed combination trams. But in time I wearied, not being well used to so much of the modern and occident, and down in the meaner streets my eye was caught by a Syrian gun and Damascus sword, displayed in a pawnbroker's window. I entered and in that strange fatality which has followed me my gaze was instantly riveted upon a face, painted on canvas, framed in heavy gilt.

It was more than the face of a girl, less than the face of a woman. It was *the* face. The electric light had shone upon it in the rotunda of the diamond mine, the vesta had disclosed it high up on the back of the white camel, it had looked through wreaths

of smoke upon the Holy Sepulchre. But it was more. It was a *perfect* face. The heart was there, the glow and fire of passion.

Not to excite too much the cupidity of the worthy Hebrew merchant, I remarked that if the price was not too high I was willing to purchase the picture. He assured me that the price was "sheep ash nodings" but that the redemption time was not expired, and thereupon showed me several others which he vigorously declared were just as good and "shoust ash sheep." One was the gaudy counterfeit of a California Venus of '49.

I could hardly convince him that to me it was not quite so good, and not till I had crossed his palm would he give me the slightest hint to lead me to the discovery of the owner. The man to whom he sent me at last for the desired information I found asleep in a low bar-room and only by filling his glass again and again could I secure from him in drunken detachments a tale which no one would ask that I repeat.

He knew the picture, the owner and the original at a time when he, too, was living in luxury. She was the most beautiful girl, he said, in all the land of the Golden Gate, and I could well believe that it must be so. She was wooed and wed by a man of untold wealth. She loved him as an angel loves, but he was not an angel and did not appreciate what was his. His debauchery horrified her. When he turned to other companionship and she protested he gave her a fortune out of his fabulous wealth, saying, "Get out of my sight forever. I've had enough of you."

After she was gone he realized what he had lost and sought the world to find her, but sought in vain. Then he returned to debauchery, threw his substance to the wind, his soul to hell, and, last of all, he pawned her portrait.

"And still you have not told me who she is," I said. "My friend, I want a name. Who is she?"

"Who?" and he glared at me till down in the depths of those drunken eyes there flashed a fire from years and years ago as he muttered, "By God, she is my wife."

"Wanted — A Legal Decision."*

BY FLORENCE WHITE RUGER.

THERE has been from time immemorial a saying that a woman cannot keep a secret. I am not going to attempt to gainsay the wisdom of the honored wiseacres of the past; but rather, with the also time-honored inconsistency of my sex, both prove and disprove the statement.

I propose to avail myself of the comfort and mental relief to be gained by a complete and detailed account of a perplexing matter, yet at the same time to leave you as much in the dark as ever in regard to the things you'll most wish to know. My place of residence is not within a thousand miles of where the shrewdest of you will guess it to be. My name I shall invent for the occasion, and therefore my secret will remain, exclusively as ever, my own. Taking it all in all, I am more and more charmed with the idea of thus having a host of confidants, without in fact having one.

Of course there will come a day when I must make a final and public decision, but that will be when the petty strife and opinions of this world will no longer have power to affect me, and I hope to have so determined the matter that the shades will have no cause to condemn.

There is quite a group of people who may have a right to criticise my final disposition of the question. First, there are my heirs and assigns —none nearer than cousins — whom I have not seen for years.

Secondly, there is Améle — I have forgotten her other name — whom I have never seen at all. Thirdly, the Smithsonian Institution may have some rights that are legal, though for my part I cannot see why they should have any claim except such as might be urged upon the ground of a disinterested patriotism on my part.

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Fourthly, the heirs of the De Courcy-Brienne family — and I'm sure I haven't an idea by what means they could be traced. Fifthly, there are the very tangible rights of the descendants of Monsieur Boehmer — even more difficult to identify than the De Courcy-Briennes. Then there are some hapless Bourbons left; and seventhly, and let us hope lastly, there is the French government, that may fancy itself concerned and make this affair a matter for diplomatic conference and an international complication. This last possibility has caused the chief of my anxieties — because, just now, woman is a pretty constant defendant at the bar of public opinion, and for one of the sex to precipitate anything so dreadful upon our nation as an international dispute would, indeed, augur an amazing temerity. As to the shades, we'll leave them out of the present exposition of the matter as not immediately concerned.

To begin at the very outset of the difficulty, I must relate a series of facts — that is they are as near the facts as the nature of the case will admit — that may seem a long way afield; but 'tis by such a combination of pigments that the canvas of life is covered, and the picture made complete.

In the year 18— there was among the faculty of a young ladies' seminary a teacher of the modern languages named Antoinette Von Burnewitz. A quaint little soul with a charming accent, and a fund of delightful stories with which she used to spice the rather wearisome details, incidental to our introduction to foreign tongues, regarding "the garden of my great-grandmother's aunt's cousin."

Not that she did not attempt to impress us with the desirability of a complete and exhaustive knowledge of the premises. She went over and over these family combinations, and it is no reflection upon her thoroughness to state that I have forgotten all about them. How often since my discovery have I wished — but this is in advance of my story.

While I am free to confess a great degree of indifference as to the fictitious landed possessions of equally fictitious relatives, that served as the basis for our grammatical gymnastics, I was certainly deeply interested in the stories of Mademoiselle's own marvelously gifted and vastly important ancestors, who, it appeared,

had, for generations, been busy developing the brains of innumerable of the world's great people — whose every virtue bore the imprint of the Von Burnewitz.

And here were we, receiving the same service from almost the last of the illustrious family, for which we had to thank the bon Dieu — and little Améle's *dot*. Little Améle was the niece and only surviving relative of the gentle little teacher of languages, and many were the tales of the young maiden's beauty and cleverness that slipped in between our linguistic speculations. There wasn't a doubt in the world, so we were assured, that she could make a settlement in life that would do honor to her ancestry — if only the matter of the *dot* could be arranged. Therefore was Mademoiselle an exile among strangers. She herself might have had an excellent establishment had it not been for this same obstinate *dot!* When Mademoiselle told us with a little sigh of the fatal effects of so small a matter upon her life's romance, I felt very much the same sense of indignation that rose in my aggrieved heart when a lack of a miserable, pestiferous little accent played such havoc with a French exercise, and I took occasion to inform Mademoiselle that such small matters never could affect the language nor matrimony of my enlightened country. That Tom loved me long before I knew a punctuation mark from an improper fraction — and to-day would rather have me near him than that I possess a whole army of semicolons, and under the circumstances I could see no earthly reason why I should be kept to grind my life away at school. Whereupon Mademoiselle laughed and said: "So — ma petite Fannie — ze pronounciation has zen a leetle ze better of lofe — even in ze belle America. But after all he eez king. Alas! eet eez not so in Europe. Money eez king — lofe eez ze subject, ze slave. He can only live at ze command of heez master."

The effect of this little confidence was that Mademoiselle and I were firmer friends than ever, and I think it may have made her a degree less exacting in regard to the affairs of Télémaque and the rest. I responded by fairly reveling in denunciations of a governmental interference with the heart's desires of its subjects, and, flapping the wings of the great American eagle, I canonized him as the patron saint of loving hearts the world over.

One day there came a greater work for the eagle to do, and little Amélie with her love affairs faded into insignificance. So many fathers and brothers were to be taken leave of that the shells that fell upon Fort Sumter might almost as well have exploded in our class rooms. The effect was very much the same. We were scattered like the leaves of autumn.

Mademoiselle, nurtured in that hospital of continental Europe — Switzerland — was among the first to volunteer for service to the wounded. Upon her arrival at her post of duty she wrote me a long letter in French, whose contents were a delightful mystery to my friends and, for the most part, to myself as well, though of course I was not called upon to announce the fact.

It was all very impressive, the speeches, marching and formation of societies for aid — until Tom volunteered. Then it became a miserable, despicable piece of business, and I could not see why people would insist in being so unreasonable. There wasn't an atom of glory to be found in the idea that my grand, brave Tom was to march away to be shot at, and I, for one, thought very meanly of the whole affair.

Chancellorsville had but one meaning for me. "Thomas M— 55th — Vols. — wounded." Then came a blank, followed by days of dumb agony. It was several weeks before we heard anything definite, and it came in the form of a letter dictated to Antoinette Von Burnewitz. He was doing well, "thanks to his tender nurse," etc. I felt quite a twinge of jealousy as I read the words of praise for her which he was constantly interlarding between the accounts of his daily life. I wasn't quite certain that it was modest of her to have so written of herself, even though Tom had given her the opportunity. Of course she excused herself in a French postscript which she added for my especial benefit. It may be the explanation lost some of its weight being presented in that somewhat abstruse form — at any rate I don't think I quite got over my aggrieved feeling until Tom came home with a limp and a pallor that made him the hero of the hour and shed a reflected glory over me.

He said, when I questioned him — "Oh, no, Fan — you're on the wrong picket there. Frenchie was a regular major general at getting things for the fellows — Every man in the ward would

have died for her on the spot — but as to falling in love with her — why — you see — that was quite out of the question." What else was said doesn't need to be told here.

There followed a good many happy years in which Mademoiselle had no part, and when she again appeared 'twas once more as a ministering angel. I am coming now to a part of my story that is hard to tell, and I may be forgiven if I do not tell it well.

An Annual from the H—— seminary containing my name and address fell into Mademoiselle's hands, and as she had recently become a resident of the same city, my old friend rejoiced at her discovery of our whereabouts and made haste to search us out. Tom's joy at the sight of a face so closely associated with the most dramatic period of his life acted like a tonic upon his failing health, and for a time quieted the dread that had made my waking and dreaming hours a torture.

The cheery little woman fell into her old position of nurse almost as a matter of course, and so perfectly was she fitted to her niche that I wondered how we had ever done without her, and grew to feel lonely when she went out to fill her few engagements with those anxious to be able to converse fluently in regard to the affairs of their "great-grandmother's aunt's cousin."

When at last we were left alone, I could not think of willingly parting from one who had been so dear to my beloved, and there was really no reason why Mademoiselle should not share my home. There was no one with a more valid claim, except it might be Améle — who was still without an establishment; the *dot* demanded by the King as indispensable to the woman who would aspire to an alliance with one of his majesty's surgeons being so considerable that the combined efforts of Mademoiselle and Améle had failed to accumulate it.

Mademoiselle was a little inclined to expatiate upon the superior faithfulness of the German heart, and would quote the surgeon as a shining example of sentiment. I, for my part, thought he would have made a better showing had he resigned his commission in the service of his mercenary monarch, and sailed away with the fair Améle to "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

When Mademoiselle used to recite the many disappointments and mishaps that had caused the failure to accumulate the *dot* she

would always end with a sigh and the remark: "I may yet be forced to sell Elizabeth De Courcy," — at the same time clasping her hands and raising her eyes to heaven as though to avert such a catastrophe.

Elizabeth De Courcy, be it known, was a precious relic of the former association of the Von Burnewitz family with the notable people of the past. 'Twas a miniature portrait of a fair woman with those inevitable long features that seem to have marked the grand lady of the seventeenth century. There was a lavish display of jewels to mark the subject as a person of consequence, and a complexion that I suppose was necessary to the sale of the portrait. I accepted the jewels and the complexion as a part of the painter's contribution to the ideal in art, since by no means could I associate the little frame, whose primitive ugliness was absolutely monstrous, with anything I had read of the exquisite taste of the age of Mme. Lebrun, the miniature's supposed painter. That it was the original framing, as Mademoiselle assured me, with awe in her tone, could not arouse my respect for its extremely inartistic existence; this fact, however, I was careful to conceal from Mademoiselle, — which concealment eventually built the foundation for all my perplexities.

This is the story of the picture, and how it came into the family of Von Burnewitz:

During the reign of Louis XVI., an ancestress of the Von Burnewitz had gone into France and secured service as governess in the family of a certain Madame De Courcy — niece to Loménie Brienne, one of the ill-fated ministers of that ill-fated monarch. Brienne being a friend of Marie Antoinette, that unhappy Queen, endeavored to comfort him in his adversity by favors showered upon his family. Thus was Madame De Courcy installed as one of the ladies in waiting upon her royal person, a position intended to benefit, which really only precipitated its unfortunate possessor into the very midst of that maelstrom of hate that was soon to sweep everything before it to destruction. When Madame De Courcy, seeing all was lost, and urged to the step by her royal mistress, set about making her escape from that seething hell of fury, she made the faithful Swiss governess her confidant and chief dependence. Confiding to her care the two precious sons, and

the portrait of the mother, whom they might never see again — a keepsake which she again and again urged should be preserved at all hazards — she saw them set forth, secretly and by night. The governess and her young charges, disguised as peasants, succeeded in passing the barriers and were soon on their way to the rendezvous in Switzerland, whither in due time they arrived, foot-sore and heavy hearted.

There was no message from the mother, and all tongues were busy with rumors of the dreadful disorders of the French capital. At last a faithful servitor came, only to confirm their worst fears.

The mother would never join them. The very day of their escape she had been accused, arrested and cast into the Abbaye where she had been a victim of the September massacre.

The delicate children, nourished in the lap of luxury, were not long to withstand the combined attacks of poverty and a rigorous climate, and soon the faithful governess was the only one left to claim or cherish the portrait. From her it passed onward, with its story, a most valued family possession, until at the hands of its last recipient it was to become a thing of merchandise in the service of sentiment. (This supposition of sentiment is always Mademoiselle's, not mine — I simply refrained from destroying any of her illusions.)

One day arrived a photograph of Améle which set Mademoiselle sighing and bemoaning the lack of the *dot* more vigorously than ever. "I haf nevair," she said tragically, "been for one moment tempted to turn Elizabeth De Courcy into potatoes nor coals for myself, even when ze need was great. But when I read of a Lebrun miniature sold for three thousand francs — Mon Dieu — but eet ez ze temptation du diable — Poor Améle — should not Elizabeth give her ze *dot?* Indeed, does she not owe so much to ze family? Has not ze time come when she should repay?"

I thought this solution of the matter a very sensible one, as I could see it was causing my little friend a very real concern which I felt must rise more from the affection she felt for Améle, than any attachment to the miniature.

One day while we were sipping our tea she again introduced the subject by saying: "I could not face my dear relatives, if during my lifetime I had parted with their precious relic — but

I haf make my will — and — when I am there to make explanation, you may sell Elizabeth De Courcy — Eet will not be long." Then it was I noticed how pale and fragile the little woman had grown, and into my heart crept the foreboding that she was right.

So it proved to be. Only two weeks later she sank, like a babe, to sleep with just a tender look to say "good-by."

I found her will, which, as she had said, provided for the sale of the beloved relic with the attested correspondence attached. I was to have the picture framed in a manner more in accord with modern taste and find for it a suitable purchaser. (It seemed Mademoiselle had almost the same tenderness for it one would have for a human being, and sought to provide a worthy association for the noble lady.)

The money realized from the sale, with an amount that I would find to the credit of Antoinette Von Burnewitz, was to be forwarded to her niece. Thus was the long deferred *dot* provided. As a token of the great love and esteem in which the testator held me I was to retain the original frame.

I did as the will directed, and it was not long before a purchaser was found, and Madame De Courcy was installed in surroundings that were most appropriate to one of her exalted station. The proceeds of the sale were dispatched, and it was but a short time until I received a letter telling me of their receipt and how they were to be the foundation of a greater happiness than Mademoiselle could ever have even dreamed; since a younger man with a better position was waiting an establishment. Of the surgeon there was never a word. It was this change of sentiment that is at the bottom of my inability to solve one of my problems; for while I might have been able to have coaxed the name of the surgeon from the recesses of my memory, of the youthful usurper I have no mental record.

It was several years after the sacrifice of Elizabeth De Courcy to the dragon of hymeneal greed that I thought to make any use of my quaint legacy. All those years the little old cement frame, with its tawdry ornamentation of peas painted black, had reposed in a compact rosewood box, to which it was securely fastened; of the miniature the only reminder was the bits of parchment that had kept the picture secure in its place.

One rainy day, while investigating the contents of an old trunk, I found among a collection of Tom's army pictures, a faded photograph of Mademoiselle in her hospital dress. Instantly the thought came to me: "I will arrange this picture in the place of Madame De Courcy;" and I smiled at the happiness I could almost believe my little friend would feel to find herself in such a place of honor.

Immediately I proceeded, with the simple tools at hand, to undertake the removal of the frame from the box, in order that I might more easily ensconce my humble friend in this deserted abiding place of the great. An awkward movement sent the funny little affair crashing to the floor. The fall upon the weakest point loosened the sturdy joints, and it was with a genuine feeling of sadness that I picked up the wreck of what had been created by a mother's tenderness so many years ago, to come to naught at the hands of a stranger.

I raised it tenderly from the floor; the pieces of broken cement and glass playing a sort of tinkling requiem. I was sorry to be parted thus from what my friend had valued so highly, and my second thought was to carefully preserve the pieces and eventually restore them to their places. So down I knelt upon the floor to secure every fragment. As I ran my hand lightly over the carpet I pushed a small particle into the light thrown out from the fireplace; instantly it turned to a spot of scintillating flame. I gazed in genuine pleasure at the pretty sight. What a beautiful effect, thought I, to be produced by a bit of broken glass. Given an advantageous light and position and it will rival a diamond of the purest water. It seemed a pity to expose the little sliver, and deprive it of its power to masquerade as its precious prototype; but prudence getting the better of the esthetic faculty I proceeded gingerly to remove the sparkling little impostor. As I brought it toward me preparatory to throwing it into the fire, the thing took on all the prismatic colors and seemed to be throwing rainbow arrows at me, from an ambush of living fire. A thought followed the attack of the rainbow darts that for the moment almost stilled my heart. With trembling fingers I turned on the electric current in the nearest bulb. The thing in my hand seemed about to dissipate itself in ten thousand sparks. I gasped, as the

solution of this mystery burst upon my astonished senses. Madame De Courcy — I half articulated — arranged this hiding place for her jewels, and for more than a century they have lain undisturbed. I stooped down, and the first piece of cement proved my theory correct, for there embedded was a fellow-gem winking at the unaccustomed light. Overcome sat I down to consider the astounding circumstance. Then I thought: "About the frame there may be concealed some writing relative to the strange disposition of the jewels;" and once more was I correct. The frame had been made in two pieces and between them was neatly fitted a piece of paper upon which could be seen a faint tracery. Turning on all the available light and using a magnifying glass, this is what I learned from that dim, sad echo of a mother's voice.

The letter was addressed by Madame De Courcy to the beloved sons, Louis and Henri. Of the loving counsel it contained I will make no attempt to inform you. I have no doubt that one day a perfect translation will be made. I will give you only a very free translation of the part bearing directly upon the matter in hand. As you already know, Madame had become a member of the Queen's immediate household. One evening, when the court was taking recreation at the Petite Trianon, the Queen had drawn Madame away from the merry, jesting crowd, and in evident agony of mind had said: "I have need of a friend — true to the death. One who will take this parcel and so conceal it that heaven itself will remain in ignorance of its whereabouts. She could not reveal to Madame Campan; Madame Polignac was also closely watched by those who plotted the downfall of this most unhappy woman. Would Madame De Courcy act for her and keep her secret?

Only a few days later court and kingdom were shaken to their center by the arrest and trial of Cardinal Rohan. On every lip was the question: "Did the great prelate, as he claimed, buy for the Queen, at her command, a necklace worth 1,600,000 livres, at a time when millions were suffering for bread? Or, as the Queen insisted, had the Cardinal purchased the diamonds for his own private ends, descending even to use forged letters, purporting to come from Marie Antoinette, as a means of proving himself her agent? And, if the Queen had indeed acquired the stones,

where was the necklace — the necklace around which centered so terrible a scandal?

To all these discussions Madame De Courcy paid only a half-hearted attention. She was too busy preparing a surprise to notice such gossip. She had made a frame like a poor peasant's. Was it not as quaint and pretty as anything they could construct? Some one said a prettier flower could have been contrived from some other grain; but Madame De Courcy smiled and was satisfied with the black painted peas.

So runs the letter that I found in the frame of the old miniature; I know that I have it correct in all its essential details, though for the sake of a smoother translation I wish I had paid more attention, years ago, to that genealogically involved grammatical garden.

From the Queen of France to her lady in waiting; from the lady in waiting to the devoted Swiss governess; thence, down a line of highly connected instructors, to our dear Mademoiselle — such had been the journey of those long-lost stones of destiny. Since this enormous trust has been thrust upon me, I have read and reread all those theories, laboriously constructed by gigantic intellects — only to realize how futile a gigantic intellect may be, — since here am I, an unpretentious citizen of the American republic, in sole possession of the true solution of one of the greatest of historical riddles.

Still I am not happy, either in my knowledge or my possession. I would that one would appear with legal claim to those sparkling mockeries of joy, whose acquirement went far toward costing a King and Queen their throne and lives — helped to change the world's history and cause one of her bloodiest pages. Come forth, thou rightful owner, and relieve my heart of the burden of their accursed custody. To whom do they really belong? May the true answer occur to the judicial minds of my countrymen and be wafted to me on the wings of our ubiquitous press.

The Hollow in the Red Rocks.*

BY A. W. WHITEHOUSE.

UDDEN and unlooked-for things happen in the mountains. For all that we are civilized, and the bad man is no longer very bad, evil deeds are done among the lonely peaks, and sometimes two men go on a journey, and very long afterwards one skeleton is found.

I am now able to give some sort of an explanation of the motives which brought about the strange disappearance of my partner last October, though many of the facts remain to be cleared up.

To tell a connected story, I have to go back to a time when I was only a small ranchman, holding the nucleus of the present splendid property, and the Black Hills Land and Cattle Company did not exist. In a matter of business I had made the acquaintance of old Matthew Sparks, the great dressed beef man at the Chicago Stockyards, and the business acquaintance had developed into a personal friendship, during the course of which Mr. Sparks had been very kind to me indeed.

It was in the spring of '97 that I received the letter from Mr. Sparks which made so great a change in my prospects. It was very long, and went rather fully into business details, but one extract from it is necessary for the proper understanding of later events.

"I am sorry to say," he wrote, "that Archie (his only son) has signalized his entrance into business life by a very disreputable social scandal. There was an entanglement with a girl, followed by her suicide. I need hardly say that had I known of it in time, Archie should have done his duty at any cost to the family, but, as it is, Chicago is too hot to hold him, and it will be better for him to keep away for several years. Archie is devoted to out-

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door pursuits, and will very probably take quite kindly to ranching, though he is no good at all in the office."

Then followed an offer which made me sit up. Briefly, I was to acquire on his behalf enough neighboring property to support 40,000 head of cattle, and my own interest in the concern was to be so large as to make me a fairly wealthy man in the course of a very few years. The only pill was Archie. I had met that youth, and did not like him. He was to be appointed a subordinate officer in the company, and was to enjoy the income of a large block of its stock, provided that he made his regular home at the ranch, and never slept away from it for more than fourteen consecutive nights.

Apart from my obligations to Mr. Sparks, the offer was too good to be refused. There is a sweet certainty about cattle when you are enfolded in the kindly arms of the Beef Trust that no cowman could resist; and so it was not very long before Archibald Sparks came to take up his residence at the ranch.

It is well to say nothing but good of the dead, but as there is not yet any legal proof that Archie has crossed the great divide, I must make haste to describe him while I can do so with a clear conscience.

He belonged to a not uncommon type that is repulsive to men, though by no means unattractive to women, a type which I can only define as the unpleasantly physical. His body was robust, his vices effeminate. He had glorified the care of his person into a kind of religion, and, though ready to go into any depths of moral nastiness for a new sensation, was master of himself and returned from his debauches fit and smiling. He was an extremely well-built boy, with one of those yearning, intense faces, that you see among a small class of poets and actors and a large class of brutes. Of brains, morals and application he was destitute.

During the first few months of the expansion of the property the work was chiefly of a clerical nature — securing options, besieging land offices, interviewing surveyors and the like. In this I did not look for any help from my new partner and none was volunteered; but when the great herds of cattle began to pour in from the West and South, I certainly expected to be able to rely on him. And for several weeks, before the novelty wore off, he

did save me a great deal of trouble. By July, however, the hot, dry season had begun in earnest, and you could hardly see the stock you were driving for the dust they raised. This was too much for Archie. He was not going to injure his precious eyes for any mere business consideration. After that I saw very little of him. His time was divided between shooting, fishing and other pursuits of a less reputable nature, and his appearances at the ranch were just sufficiently frequent to fulfil the conditions which held his interest in the property.

It was towards the end of July that Clark Fenton arrived in the town in which we get our supplies. Evidently belonging to the better class of working men, he was short, extremely powerful, and spoke pronouncedly through his nose. His conversation was chiefly remarkable from its contrast to the vigorous and high-flavored language used by the natives. He never swore.

Apparently he had plenty of money, and at first when questioned as to his intentions, replied that he had earned enough for a holiday, and was going to look around a bit before settling on a line of work. He was jack of many trades, he said, and could make a good living as soon as he decided. He picked up a number of acquaintances, displayed a great interest in the resources and prospects of the surrounding country, and early in August announced that he had determined to try his luck for a season as a professional hunter and trapper.

In this capacity he met with success from the start. He was a brilliant shot, and though the country was new to him, he seemed to have a natural instinct as to the whereabouts of game. Several short trips were arranged by the local magnates, with Fenton as a pilot, and in each case they returned spoil-laden.

Naturally, Archie fell in with him, and naturally they had much enthusiastic talk in common, but their several engagements prevented them from arranging an expedition together till the middle of October.

About this time there were large and destructive forest fires in the Rockies, and the smoke hung a heavy pall over all the land. The sun rose and set blood-red, and men could hardly quench their thirst. Much game was driven out, and, crossing the intervening forty miles of plain, deer and elk took up their abode on

our range in the south end of the Black Hills. Other visitors arrived, not so welcome. A mountain lion was seen by one of our cowboys feasting on a calf, and the next night, ten miles away, he robbed the henroost of a fence-rider.

To harbor the beast meant a certain loss of a thousand dollars a year, and I turned his pursuit and destruction over to Archie, who took to the idea with great eagerness. He at once engaged Clark Fenton to accompany him, and on the 17th of October the pair started with a team and spring wagon belonging to the ranch, loaded with guns, rifles and all the paraphernalia required for a two weeks' camp in the hills.

From that day to this, no man, so far as is known, has ever set eyes on either of them.

A fortnight went by, but as Archie was supposed to be hunting within our fence (an enclosure, by the way, of about three-quarters of a million acres) and was at work for the benefit of the ranch, I made no report of his absence to his father. But during the third week the weather became very bitter and stormy — too rough, I should have supposed, for my partner — and when, on the 7th of November, I found that none of the cowboys had seen their camp at all, I became alarmed, and telegraphed to Mr. Sparks.

Promptly came back the reply:

"Spend up to fifty thousand in inquiries. Draw on me."

The number of riders we put out to cover the ground, and the number of detectives we employed would hardly be believed, if I gave them; but up to June, '98, the only things we recovered were the wagon and horses. A Mexican in Arizona was working old Blue, and a missionary on the Crow Reservation in Montana had Buck and the wagon, but they had passed through so many hands that it was impossible to trace them back to any one resembling either Clark Fenton or Archie Sparks.

Poor Mr. Sparks took the disappearance of his son very deeply to heart, and his efforts in the search were redoubled, but were entirely fruitless.

In June, '98, I had occasion to ride over a part of the range about ten miles distant from the home ranch. The nature of the country was rather curious. The soil was a heavy, orange-colored sand, growing a fairly good stand of pasture grass, and spangled

at this season with wild flowers of every hue. At frequent intervals there rose red sandstone rocks, some of great size, and carved by weather into the most fantastic shapes. Here would be a table, many hundred tons in weight, set on three slender legs; there a thin slab, serving edgeways for a sun dial. Fancy could picture George Washington, the Sphinx and other celebrities, when the strange masses were looked at from the proper point.

These crags were the home of wildcats, and my bull-terriers (who generally succeeded in following me when I meant to leave them at home) were soon bustling one from rock to rock. The cat finally took refuge in a mass of red sandstone about an acre in extent, the terriers following, and while I waited for them to come out again I amused myself by examining the curious formation. On three sides the walls were sheer, or perhaps a little overhanging, to the height of forty feet. At the top the weather had done strange work. Crowning the walls were great mushroom-like shapes, on high, thick stems, each different and yet all alike. The intervals were almost regular, giving the appearance of a battlemented tower, or, better, of some vast fantastic crown. To the east there was a cleft, where willows and underbrush grew thickly on a steep slope; and amid them issued a tiny spring.

I could hear barking and spitting from somewhere in the rock, and determined to clamber up and see how my dogs were faring. I struggled up through the tangled undergrowth, then, with knees and fingernails up a slippery slope of sandstone, and checked myself at the top just in time to avoid a breakneck fall.

For the great rock was hollow. Just as the sheer walls rose on the outside, so they fell within, enclosing a great pit, perhaps thirty yards in length and fifteen broad. In one corner were the bull pups, actively assailing the cat. How had they come there? Examining the pit more carefully, I saw that on one side there was a difficult entrance, where the rock sloped down, and the sheer drop was only about seven feet, though there was no unaided exit for man or beast. I fetched a lariat from my horse, made a dangerous scramble among the mushroom-headed rocks, and, securing my rope round the stem of one of them, let myself down just in time to assist at the obsequies of the cat.

The field of battle had centered near a small hole in the rocky

wall, which a pack rat had partly filled with brush and various rubbish. This had been disturbed by the cat and dog encounter, and further in the hole I saw what looked like brown leather. Brown leather it proved to be — a check book of the kind that folds over, and serves for holding other documents.

The checks had been used, and the counterfoils were scribbled over in pencil. The pencil writing was hard to decipher, but a very short inspection satisfied me that it was a diary kept by Archie Sparks.

This is what he wrote:

Oct. 18 — Pain in my foot is awful, but I must write, as I do not expect to get out of here alive. Why did he do it? But you do not know yet what he did, so I will tell. Yesterday we came here and camped at the little spring. Started to explore the rocks about sunset. Found the way into the hollow, and I let myself down by a rope. Left both rifles at the top, and Clark Fenton was to follow me down. Instead of doing so, he pulled up the rope, saying 'This place will do as well as any" and shot me through the right foot. Shock must have made me faint, as I heard him saying things I didn't understand. Finally wished me a pleasant evening; said I should see him to-morrow, and went away. Fenton must be mad, to attack me like this, and I doubt if help arrives in time.

Oct. 19 — Fenton is worse than mad — he is Minnie's brother. Minnie was my Chicago girl, you know. Was mining in Oregon then, and I never saw him. Now he tells me he is going to watch me starve to death, and hopes I will enjoy it. Pain in foot worse, and leg swollen. He let me down water in a tin bucket; says he wants me to have plenty of time. I see no hope.

Oct. 20 — Screamed all day, but Fenton, or Johnson as his real name is, told me to go ahead and scream. Pain in foot less, but awful cramps in stomach. He eats his meals in full view of me. I ate gooseberry leaves.

Oct. 21 — Minnie came to see me to-day with a baby in her arms; opened a way for me out of the rock; I started to follow, but fell down, down, down.

Oct. 22 — Poor Minnie.

After this there were only a few feeble scrawls.

We have turned over all the loose sand in the hollow, and have had large gangs of men examine the ground in all directions, but have come on no other evidence that would support the idea that poor Archie was buried in the neighborhood.

Up to date there has been no news of Johnson, alias Fenton.

He is thickset, speaks with a nasal accent, and never swears.

Sir Straggle.*

BY ENOS D. TAYLOR.

ROM what line of modest sires he drew the blood that pulsed through his noble heart it matters not, since his title was his by merit, bestowed upon him by the honest sovereign of the little realm where he passed his last days. It is enough to say that he was a worthy dog.

As to the experiences of his prehistoric years they were such as usually fall to dogs not wearing collars properly engraved with name and number — a daily-recurring contest to secure life-sustaining bones on the one hand and to dodge death-dealing stones on the other. A very dog's life, in truth, yet, philosophically endured, it developed in his character those qualities of dignified persistence that introduced him into Sally Markham's home and heart. Not that he received the slightest encouragement from that worthy spinster when he drifted into her wake, as she limped home one October evening. In fact, he simply followed her, uninvited, to her two-room house, on the corner of the first alley after you leave Green Street going north on Grimley, was at once ejected in a matter-of-fact manner, attacked the problem again with similar results, persevered, and was forthwith invited to break bread with Sally, who admired persistence.

Thus all in a day was the nameless canine vagabond promoted to the possession of a friend, a home and a title.

"Sir Straggle!" No officer of a college of heraldry could have invented a name and title more appropriate than the combination conferred by Sally upon this self-made dog. The "Sir," of course, stood for his native dignity. The "Straggle" referred to his appearance, and was positively inspired. If what was meant for a brown stripe had started rearward along his back, it had straggled to one side of its prescribed path and spread itself out into a dirty

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yellow patch, which, in turn, had faded away into a nameless compromise between white and dirty white. If his legs had really intended to be straight, they had been unable long to stand the distraction of an early life spent in the efforts simultaneously to dodge well-directed missiles and to chase the elusive meal, and had straggled outward as though each would oppose the efforts of all the other members of the aggregation to pursue a definite course. If his tail had been originally designed for an ornament, it now straggled with a painful abruptness that suggested the sometime potent influence of a heavily-loaded cart wheel.

Altogether, never was a dog so out of drawing; and for that very reason never a dog so happily matched with his domicile and mistress. For Miss Sally, who was sixty years old, and weighed ninety pounds, had a crooked back, a crooked temper, a crooked path in life; in fact, everything about her was a little misshapen except her heart, which was big and soft and all that a heart should be. As for her little two-room house, that was so old and out-of-plumb that it seemed doubtful if it would last even during the lifetime of Miss Sally, who was, by the bequest of a well-to-do relative, its occupant during her natural existence.

To such an establishment a watch dog seemed about as superfluous as a *porte-cochère*. But to Miss Sally it was a relief, new every morning, to leave this faithful hênchman keeping watch and ward over her infinitesimal yard, while she went out to "work around" for her daily bread, as it was a fresh delight each evening to find him waiting for her at the gate. As for Sir Straggle, the discipline he put upon himself was nothing short of military. Neither the advances of unemployed canines nor the enticements of neighboring refuse barrels could win him from the stern patrol system he had invented. Even the platter of meat and pan of water that his mistress left each morning in the little shed at the back of the house — even these lawful perquisites — beguiled him not until his weather eye saw noon written on the sky. So resolutely had the sometime vagabond imbibed the system of the most methodical of women, his mistress.

Indeed, if a fixed idea be a form of lunacy, Miss Sally's method was her madness. In the routine of her days was no greater variation than that of brown bread with molasses or without it for

breakfast, or the substitution of scrubbing for window cleaning in her daily program. In any case her day — and, therefore, Straggle's day — really began when, her work ended, she let herself and her retainer into the little living-room at night. Its order was invariable. First of all — a number in which his dogship had no share — was the pipe. Surely it was no mean ordeal for a dog of the people, who knew what was being withheld from him, to sit without so much as a whimper, while Miss Sally limped into the front room, removed from the mantel the pipe, filled it with a carefully measured allowance of the soothing leaf, applied the match, drew a coaxing breath, and perhaps even prodded the bowl with a hairpin before the beloved corncob could be induced to "draw." This done, Miss Sally proceeded to relieve the strain on Straggle's feelings, not to say his tail, which was near total dislocation through thumping on the bare floor. Doffing bonnet and wrap, she fished up from the depths of a mysterious pocket a neat parcel, containing some choice scraps, on feast days including, perhaps, even a chicken bone, a tribute which Sir Straggle accepted with that dignified courtesy with which true gentility acknowledges favors.

Straggle's comfort thus attended to, Miss Sally started a fire to crackling in the little cook-stove, in preparation for the inevitable cup of tea. When the kettle gave warning of its intention to boil, she knocked the ashes from her pipe into the hearth of the stove and returned the trusty corncob to the spot accurately defined by two yawning cracks on the black-painted front mantel.

By this time, Straggle, having satisfied his inner dog, sat by, rigid with expectation. Now approached the crowning moment of the evening.

Opening a little closet to the left of the cook-stove, his mistress secured a round bundle carefully wrapped in brown paper, which she handled tenderly, even sadly, as she read the inscription on a white label pasted on its side. This she laid on one corner of the little dining-room table. From an over-the-mantel cupboard she proceeded to extract a green glass pickle-dish which she placed beside the bundle. Then followed an old silver butter-knife, a pair of spectacles with heavy steel bows, and a treasured thimble. A small varnished wooden box, fastened by a little lock, that she

brought from the mantel in the front room, completed the collection of treasured penates.

At this point the teakettle sputtered itself into her thoughts and she made her tea, which with its bread and butter accompaniment she consumed standing, feasting her eyes meantime with pride and fondness upon the array on the table before her.

Supper summarily disposed of, the mistress of the house settled herself into a straight-backed chair, adjusted the heavy spectacles, and drawing from its hiding place in her bosom a little key, suspended by a fine chain, unlocked the box and took from it a neatly folded white paper and a short, stubby pencil. Unfolding the paper she laboriously followed its fine scrawl, muttering to herself from time to time, as she touched with her left index finger one or the other of the articles before her, or shifted it to bring the collection into the exact order indicated by the list.

The inventory being verified to her satisfaction, she proceeded to take from her nose the spectacles, which she surveyed, first dubiously, then with a growing perplexity that cast its first cloud over her evening recreation. To enter her precious spectacles on that list was obviously her duty. Yet how to do this if they were not before her eyes with the rest of the collection — to be taken up, turned over, shifted, identified two or three times as an aid to composition — and how to see to write if they were added to the collection?

That was the problem before which Miss Sally's system had gone down, night after night, for many years. It was a serious matter in itself, but with Sir Straggle's arrival it became positively sinister. To her worshipful and courteous companion she had assigned the very last place upon that important paper, and as she always left off at that perplexing penultimate item, Sir Straggle seemed destined never to come into his own.

Once only she had attempted to bring about an exchange of those two items, but with disastrous results. Having stood the dog upon the table and placed the auxiliary left forefinger just midway of his back, at the point where the brown stripe took its departure from the axis of symmetry, she began the task of making him a matter of record. But alas! the geometrical instinct of his legs asserted itself, and each began to slide along its re-

spective diagonal toward one corner of the smooth table-top. Sally felt the motion, but she durst not desert her inspiration, of which she was now in full possession, and pressing her mute devotee still harder, to anchor him more firmly to his place, she drove her pencil along feverishly. But the harder she pressed the more he spread, until suddenly, and just as the task wanted but a word more of completion, he took entire possession, scattering everything with a soft swish, and lay there, blinking, without so much as having started a seam in his grave demeanor.

Crack!

Straggle thought of the days of old as he picked himself up, full two yards away from the table, and sadly watched his irate mistress reassemble the wreckage.

"Drat your pesky legs, Strag, why don't you go som ers, stid o' tryin' to go everywheres to once?" she mourned, gazing ruefully at a ragged slit in the paper over which she had labored so long. To retain a list thus mutilated would be to shatter all her principles. To rewrite it meant painstaking labors for many nights, before she finally got down to the spectacles, restored by Straggle's direful deed to their old position of next to last place on the list, a position which Miss Sally still struggled vainly to record.

"I'm most discouraged, Strag," she would confide, after these nightly defeats, to her companion who sat blinking at a courteous distance. "Here I've been nigh onto four years tryin' to get to you, an' these specs allers prevents. An' a cripple like me can't last forever."

But at this point her monologue was always ended by a dismal howl from Sir Straggle, whose emotions had been worked upon to a degree beyond repression by Miss Sally's plaintive treble. Perhaps it was that responsive note, the first Miss Sally had touched for many years, that nerved her to what was undoubtedly the greatest step of her life. So great a step, indeed, that even Miss Sally's retainer felt the difference in his mistress's walk, her voice, the very triumphant manner in which she went through her usual ceremonial on the evening of her great achievement. There was even a sparkle in her eyes, a faint flush on her cheeks as she reached her usual stumbling block, and, wonderful to relate,

simply folded up the list, put it in the sacred box and drew out a fresh piece of paper!

"It was the drug-store man told me, Strag," she breathed exultantly. "He studied law once by correspondence, an' he told me just' how to get around them specs. I never counted on askin' advice of a human bein', but I did it for you, Strag, do you understand, for you?"

Apparently Strag did understand, for he stood, head poked forward, ears alert, eyes reduced to knowing pin points.

"I never set much by the drug-store man," Miss Sally continued, as she labored over her new document, "but he certainly is a master-hand at getting around."

And then for an hour there was silence in the little room, broken only by the painful scratching of the pencil, and Miss Sally's long breaths. As for Straggle, he sat there like the wooden image of a watch-dog; one might have thought he dozed except for those bright, restless eyes.

It was ten o'clock, an hour that usually saw Miss Sally safely in bed, when the woman finally laid down her pencil, and, folding up the second document, placed it beside the other in the wooden box, with an impressive solemnity suggestive of a sacred ritual. The solemnity was also in her eyes and voice, when she turned to the guardian of her hearth and home.

"Straggle, Sir Straggle," she quavered, "you won't forget, will you, it's for you I done it. I tuk you in from a hard life, Sir, an' I want you certain to be a gentleman, no matter what comes to you. You had the good fortune of the right sort of manners from the first, Sir, and the company you've been associatin' with, come nigh about four years, has been genteel enough, so they aint no reason for you to turn out bad. But whatever happens don't forget, Sir, that great possessions means great responsibilities. Don't forget that, will ye? Why Straggle —"

For, as she stooped over him, her undemonstrative companion suddenly stretched an appealing paw to the hem of her dress, and stood looking speechless devotion into her dim old eyes.

"Why Strag, you do — set store by me, don't ye," she murmured, stroking the ugly head awkwardly.

And who shall say that in that moment the dumb animal did

not in some inarticulate language vow to protect his loved mistress from any danger that might beset her? Might? Would — did, already had threatened — since that moment early in the evening when Straggle's half-shut eyes had detected other eyes peering in at the window upon Miss Sally as she worked at the precious document. Just for a moment Straggle had seen them, but in that instant the one-time dog of the street knew and recognized the eyes of an evil-doer. And he felt, though he could not see, that somewhere from the darkness they still followed the motions of poor Miss Sally with malicious curiosity that increased to ugly greed when she placed the precious box upon the mantelpiece.

The responsibility of great possessions — aye and of great love — surely in his own fashion Sir Straggle knew, and summoned up all his brave heart to be equal to them — as, later, he sat there in the dim, silent kitchen, motionless, alert, while Miss Sally slumbered in the next room — the room that sheltered her treasure.

It was past midnight when a faint creaking of the window looking out upon the alley told Straggle that his climacteric was at hand. Slowly, spasmodically — creak following silence, silence succeeding creak again, the window ascended. Then a great, coarse foot — such a foot as set up in Straggle's wide-awake head a momentary nightmare of horrid retrospection, settling finally in his ribs — a foot slowly pushed through the opening, bringing after it the head and body of the enemy, who, in a moment more, stood within the room. Cautiously, by aid of the dim light of the lamp in the next room, the stranger advanced, pausing after every step or two to listen and look back at the window, as though fearing to bar escape.

Escape! and from what?

He knew not that a determined heart sustained a worthy hero not four paces from him, and certainly he could not have feared bodily harm at the hands of crooked old Sally. Though the heart of the professional evil-doer does not vibrate in sympathy with tears or mirth, there is a terrible resonance about it that at the slightest shock of the right sort may drive him to cover. If one could only be a criminal without having to carry with him a

criminal's heart, he might have peace to go about his business. But let him reconnoitre and assume that he is unmolested in his work — a snapping twig will fill his senses with turbulent alarm.

Alarm? No, it was horror — grim, terrible — with which the man, now at Miss Sally's bedside, started away, his hand outstretched as though to ward off some awful menace. Already he has turned as though to flee, when his eyes fall upon the little box on the mantelpiece. Uncertain, bewildered, he stops, looks again fearfully toward the bed, then cautiously reaches out a shaking hand.

Without so much as a preliminary growl, Straggle bounds from the shadow, there is a short struggle in which the man's booty slips from his fingers, scattering its contents over the floor. Then follows a curse, a blow, a sound of rending cloth, and the man is out of the room and across the sill into the alley.

But the box is safe.

And Sir Straggle?

Safe, too, we will hope, in some dog Elysium for canine heroes. But before the brave little life went out, he had crept close enough to the bedside of his mistress to lick the withered old hand as though in token of a fealty that feared no foe.

There the next morning Caroline Hensley, Miss Sally's neighbor, found the two, quite dead, and as she said "both as natural as life, and ever so much more peaceful." And indeed the smile on Miss Sally's withered face may be supposed to reflect her joy that the problem of her life had its solution before she died. For the two papers beside her bed were as binding to her neighborly executor as though drawn up with all the "whereases" and "herebefore-mentioned" clauses in the world. The first read as follows:

"This is my last will and testyment. I, Sarah Jane Williamson, bein' in my right mind, an' realizin' that my time hear iz about done, an' moreover, not bein' pleazed overmuch at some of the doin's I've seen amongst folks what hez been left goods and propwrity by theer diseezed betters, do declare these follerin to be my mind and will concernin' what goods and chatels I hev got.

"My nabor, Caroline Hensley, havin' been a good friend to me, I leave for her little girl, Ruth, the brown bundle, with a white paper and writin' in it wich contains my dres I was to ware to merry William who died.

"2. As Jerry Hensley hez done me more than one good turn, I give him the silver butter-knife what was my grandfather's.

"3. As Lizbeth Jones hez got much sewin' to do, an' is a worthey woman, though we aint never agreed exactly in the plan of salvashun, she bein' a baptis an' me a methydist, I want her to hev my thimbul, what hez lots of ware in it.

"4. My green glass pickel dish is to go to my brother George's rich wife, she havin' giv it to me first, and many a sour look since to go with it."

Paper number two read like this:

"This is a coddycil accordin to law as the drugstore man advized me, thare bein' no certenty I'd ever finish my will proper, on account of my specs. I want them to go to Milly Murray, what's had so much trubble with Myopy. The specs hez helped me to read closter to my book, and is good and cheap too.

"And all the rest of my effecsks, real and personal, includin the furniture of this domicile, my cloze and forty three dollars in the Nickel Savings Bank, I hereby give and bequeeth to my beloved companion, Sir Straggle, which bein a brute beest was a better friend and lived better accordin to his light than most humans. And I ask that Caroline Hensley will credit him with these effecks, and in return that she and those to come after her will give him a home and take an interest in him so long as he lives, so help them God."

Though this unique will and codicil were never passed upon by a court of probate, their provisions were conscientiously construed and scrupulously executed, and Sir Straggle, though he did not survive to enjoy in life the bequest of his mistress, was provided by her executrix with a burial place safe from molestation, and marked by a plain but fitting headstone.

The Sea and the Roses.*

BY GEORGE AUSTIN BARNES.

REAT masses of roses covered the wall and grew in rank profusion along the roadside, and, when I left the pony-cart and climbed the bank, I could see that the yard was filled with them and the little cottage facing the sea almost hidden with their wealth of color.

Thinking that the owner would not object to my gathering a small bunch from such an abundance, I was proceeding to do so, when, from behind a bush, a little old lady appeared, her refined face delicately pink from her exertions, looking as sweet as one of the roses among which she was working.

"Please don't pick them," she said, coming forward a few steps. "Don't think I'm selfish, but they're Dedie's, and I can't let any one else have them," and with implicit faith in my obedience to her request, she returned to her work.

For a few minutes I stood and watched her deftly loosening the earth around the roots of a young rose-bush, and then, with the guilt of a child discovered in some wrong-doing, I laid the few roses I had plucked upon the wall, and going back to the cart drove to my friend's house, where I was visiting.

A few days later, while we were passing the garden with its rose-covered wall, the sweet old lady appeared from among the bushes, her arms full of cut roses, which she pressed against her breast.

To my friend's greeting she replied with a pleased light of recognition in her eyes.

"Who is she?" I asked, when we had passed out of hearing; and I told the episode of yesterday.

My friend did not answer for a few moments.

"Hers is a sad story. Years ago she came here, a bride, to

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spend her honeymoon in the little cottage, which belonged to her husband. They were wealthy, and the weeks slipped by until fall, when they returned to their city home; but she loved the place so that every summer they returned here to spend a few weeks in the country, within sight of the sea. And here, one July morning, when the roses she had trained over her windows were hanging heavy with dew, a little girl came to bless the household. The husband, going to the open window, plucked a great spray of roses, and placing them on a stand by the bedside, said, 'This shall be her luck flower.' And he kissed the babe and the young mother. They named the child Edith, but she always called herself 'Dedie.'

"When the lady appeared among us the second summer after, she was accompanied only by her baby; and instead of the beautiful gowns that had been her husband's delight, she wore a widow's dress, and her dear face was haggard with grief.

"The child had grown into a little lisping tot, who followed her mother about the house and garden, which was the widow's great solace, and where she spent most of her time, only going each day to the high cliff, from which she and her husband used to watch the sun set across the ocean, and the beach where they had walked in the moonlight, two married lovers.

"The flowers that had graced the baby's entry into the world seemed to have possessed some occult charm, for never was any one more fond of roses than this child. She always carried a bouquet in her chubby hand, or wore a spray pinned on to her little pinafore, and if, by chance, she dropped one, she always stopped to pick it up.

"She was a strange child, too, with little unchildish notions and fancies that oppressed one with a feeling of eeriness. The ocean fascinated her, and ofttimes at night, when it roared upon the rocky headland, she would awaken her mother and say, 'Mamma, why does the sea want me? Why does it keep calling to me?' Or she would sit for hours on the sand, laughing and talking to the little waves and ripples that ran up the beach.

"One evening her mother tied a little hood over the curls, and together they went down to the headland, as was their custom, the child carrying a big spray of Jacqueminots. A strong wind was

blowing out to sea, and the mother shielded the child in front of her. They had stood thus for some minutes, when the roses slipped from the child's hands, and the wind caught and blew them toward the edge of the cliff. She darted forward to save them, and was stooping at the very edge to pick them up, when there came a sudden blast, she tottered on the brink for a moment, and then, grasping the spray of roses in her little hands, pitched forward into the sea.

"Her mother never returned to her city home. Winter and summer she has roses blooming in the cottage or garden, and every evening she goes to the cliff with an offering of flowers for 'Dedie's grave,' as she calls the ocean."

As we returned home that evening, my friend pointed out toward the sea. On a high point overlooking the water a lone figure was outlined against the setting sun. As we looked, she raised her arms and threw a great cluster of roses out into the water, and then sank upon her knees and with clasped hands watched them float out into the pathway of the sun.

So large a grave; so small a child!